



what is Zen?

[3

Zen Master Seung Sahn

First you must ask, "What am I? What is the purpose of my life?" If you answer with words, this is only thinking. Maybe you say, "I am a doctor." But if you are with a patient and you are thinking, "I am a great doctor," then you cannot perceive your patient's situation—you are caught in your thinking. Thinking is only understanding; like a person in a hospital you will find that understanding cannot help you. Then what? If you don't know, you must only go straight—don't know.

Don't know mind cuts through thinking; it is before thinking. Before thinking there is no doctor, no patient; also no God, no Buddha, no "I," no words—nothing at all. At that point you and the universe become one. We call this nothing-mind or primary point. Some people say this is God, or universal energy, or bliss, or extinction. But these are only teaching words—nothing mind is before words.

Zen is attaining nothing mind and then using nothing mind to help our world. How can you use it? Make nothing mind into big-love-mind. Nothing mind never appears or disappears. If you do correct meditation, your nothing-mind becomes strong and you perceive your situation clearly! What you see, hear, smell, taste, and touch are all the truth, without thinking! So your mind is like a mirror. Then moment to moment you can keep your correct situation. When a doctor is with his patients, if he drops I-my-me mind and becomes one with them, then helping them is possible. When a doctor goes home and is with their family, if they keep 100% parent mind, then understanding what is best for their children is clear. Just like this. The blue mountain does not move. The white clouds float back and forth. ☸